

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM NO. 73/2020

From : Permanent Secretary for Education

To : Supervisors and Heads of
Kindergartens /Kindergarten-cum-Child
Care Centers and Schools with
Kindergarten Classes

Ref. : EDBCM73/2020

Date: 19 June 2020

Admission Arrangements for Nursery Classes in Kindergartens for the 2021/22 School Year

Summary

This circular memorandum announces details of the admission arrangements for Nursery (K1) classes in kindergartens (KGs) for the 2021/22 school year (hereafter referred to as “2021/22 K1 Admission Arrangements”) and reminds KGs, KG-cum-child care centers and schools with KG classes (hereafter collectively referred to as “KGs”) of the issues related to their student admission. The 2021/22 K1 Admission Arrangements are applicable to KGs joining the KG education scheme (hereafter referred to as “Scheme”). Heads of KGs should ensure that this circular memorandum is circulated to all teachers and staff concerned for action.

Background

2. The Government has implemented the Scheme starting from the 2017/18 school year. The policy objectives are to provide good quality and highly affordable KG education, and enhance the accessibility of students to different modes of services that suit their specific needs. In this regard, on top of the basic half-day (HD) unit subsidy for HD service, the Government provides additional resources for eligible KGs offering whole-day (WD) and long WD (LWD) services to encourage them to offer such services at a more affordable rate. Under the Scheme, KG student admission, in principle, remains a school-based matter to maintain the flexibility and diversity of the KG sector and free choice for parents. To achieve the objectives as mentioned in paragraph 3 below, the EDB will continue the implementation of K1 Admission Arrangements for the 2021/22 school year.

Details

Objectives

3. The EDB aims to achieve the following objectives through the 2021/22 K1 Admission Arrangements:

- To avoid parents queuing up for a long time for application forms;
- To avoid hoarding of more than one place by a child at any one time to enable KGs to confirm enrolment for manpower planning, and facilitate parents in securing a place for their children in a timely manner; and
- To help parents find a place for their children by providing them information on the vacancy situation.

Admission Arrangements

Distribution of Application Forms

4. We understand that most KGs have uploaded their admission application forms onto their websites for downloading by parents. There are also KGs which distribute printed application forms. Irrespective of the means of distributing application forms, KGs should not limit the number of forms to be distributed to avoid parents queuing up for a long time for application forms. Similarly, KGs should not set a quota on the number of application forms to be collected. KGs are required to inform parents in advance the arrangement for obtaining application forms and submitting admission applications, including the dates for distribution and submission of application forms, application procedure and fee¹ (if applicable), etc. so that parents can make preparation.

School-based Admission Mechanism

5. To enhance transparency and avoid unnecessary misunderstanding or complaints, KGs are required to put in place a school-based admission mechanism which should include the admission procedure and criteria, the number of child-applicants to be interviewed, etc. They are also required to inform parents in advance of the details of their school-based admission mechanism through effective channels (e.g. guidance notes in application forms, admission guidelines/leaflets, school website, etc.) and upload the relevant information together with the link to the EDB's website on K1 Admission Arrangements in KGs onto the school website to facilitate browsing and downloading by parents. KGs must also provide timely response to parents' enquiries about admission arrangements

¹ For all KGs joining/intending to join the Scheme in the 2021/22 school year, the approved ceiling of application fee to be collected from the children applying for admission to K1 in the 2021/22 school year is \$40. Schools are not allowed to collect application fees exceeding the approved ceiling.

and handle related complaints. The admission mechanism must be fair, just and open and in compliance with the existing anti-discrimination legislation (including the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, Disability Discrimination Ordinance, Family Status Discrimination Ordinance and Race Discrimination Ordinance), Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, etc., as well as circulars and guidelines issued by the EDB, e.g. the application forms and relevant information provided by KGs must be in both Chinese and English.

6. For WD/LWD services, KGs are provided with additional resources by the Government. To unleash the potential of the local labour force under the population policy, when considering applications for WD/LWD services, KGs should give due priority to families that require the services (such as those with working parents) and those having genuine need for WD/LWD services due to their special circumstances (such as families which need to take care of persons with disability at home). Such relevant information should be included in the admission criteria announced by the KGs.

7. Under the Scheme, in principle, student admission will continue to be school-based, KGs should comply with the requirements as stipulated in paragraphs 4 to 6 above. Under special circumstances, if Scheme-KGs still have vacancies and individual children (including children at risk of developmental delay and non-Chinese speaking children) encounter difficulties in applying for admission, Regional Education Offices or Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres will make referrals as appropriate.

“Not More Than One Place for Each Child” Measure

8. To prevent a child from hoarding a number of places at one time, which would affect other children, each child who can receive education in Hong Kong will only be issued one registration document and all Scheme-KGs can only admit children holding a valid registration document. Parents are required to apply timely and obtain a valid registration document to complete the registration procedure for admission to a K1 class in a Scheme-KG in the 2021/22 school year.

9. If parents wish to apply for admission to a K1 class in a Scheme-KG for their children in the 2021/22 school year, they are required to apply to the EDB for the Registration Certificate for KG Admission (hereafter referred to as “RC”) from **September to November 2020**. Details on application will be announced in or before September this year and uploaded to the EDB’s website. Upon receipt of the applications with all necessary information and documents provided, the EDB will generally take six to eight weeks to complete processing the applications and issue the RC by post to applicants who are eligible for subsidy under the Scheme. If a child cannot obtain an RC because

he/she can receive education in Hong Kong but is not eligible for subsidy under the Scheme², the EDB will issue a Kindergarten Admission Pass (hereafter referred to as AP) to the child concerned for registration to a Scheme-KG, but the parents concerned are required to pay full school fees (i.e. before deduction of subsidy under the Scheme) as shown on the Fees Certificate of the KG admitting the child.

10. While individual KGs may conduct their admission procedures according to their school-based arrangements, KGs are reminded to comply with the requirements in relevant circulars and guidelines on student admission for the next school year issued by the EDB.

11. If interviews are arranged as part of the admission procedures, KGs are required to respect the pattern of children's development and should not require children to answer questions involving skills or knowledge or do tasks that are intellectually, physically and emotionally beyond their age.

12. KGs must notify parents of the results of K1 admission before **18 December 2020**. Parents will be required to confirm acceptance of a K1 place by submitting the RC/AP and paying the registration fee³ during the Centralised Registration Dates to complete the registration procedure. Since each child will be issued only one RC/AP, parents must choose only one KG for registration. **The Centralised Registration Dates are 7 to 9 January 2021 (Thursday to Saturday)**. A flowchart on the 2021/22 K1 Admission Arrangements is at **Appendix 1**.

13. After the Centralised Registration Dates, KGs may fill the vacancies by admitting children on the waiting list or those who have not yet secured a place. If a child is offered a place after the Centralised Registration Dates, the parents should complete the registration procedure on the date set by individual KGs, but they are still required to complete the registration by submitting the RC/AP to the KG concerned.

14. In general, the validity period of RC is 3 years. If parents arrange for their children to receive KG education for more than 3 years, parents have to pay full school fee before deduction of subsidy under the Scheme. Under special circumstances (e.g. a relevant registered medical practitioner or professional has confirmed the special need(s) of the child for pursuing KG education for a period longer than the normal three years.), parents may apply for extension of the validity period of the RC. KGs should inform the parents of the points to note in writing when the parents show intention in arranging their children to receive KG education for more than 3 years. Template of the notice concerned is at Appendix 2 of "Guidelines on Kindergarten Admission Arrangements for the 2021/22

² Upon obtaining permission from the Director of Immigration, non-local children (such as children holding a form of recognizance, children whose parent(s) is/are holding a student visa, etc.) can receive education in Hong Kong but they are not eligible for subsidy under the Scheme.

³ For all KGs joining/intending to join the Scheme in the 2021/22 school year, the approved ceilings of registration fee to be collected from the children admitted to K1 in the 2021/22 school year are \$970 and \$1,570 for HD session and WD session respectively. Schools are not allowed to collect registration fees exceeding the approved ceilings.

School Year”.

15. KGs should inform parents clearly of the registration procedures and regulations, including no refund of registration fee if parents give up the place after registration.

Admission Support for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Children

16. KGs are reminded that equal opportunities must be provided for all children (regardless of their race, gender and ability) in admission to KGs, including handling the applications from NCS children properly with due regard to the differences in their culture and customs from local practices. KGs must also be careful about the details of admission arrangements on whether they may involve direct or indirect discrimination; when answering enquiries from parents, teachers and staff should offer assistance as appropriate and avoid misunderstanding. KGs must provide both Chinese and English versions of the application form and relevant information. To facilitate parents of NCS children in obtaining relevant information, KGs should create an icon or provide a simple message in English on the home page of the school website prominently, to let parents know instantly how to obtain the English version of the information when browsing the home page of the school website. At the same time, KGs should also provide the link to the English version of the EDB’s website on K1 Admission Arrangements in KGs (https://www.edb.gov.hk/k1-admission_e) on the school website prominently (e.g. home page of the school website/the webpage providing the admission information in English) to facilitate parents in browsing relevant information provided by the EDB. KGs have to put in place effective means of communication and offer assistance to NCS children and their parents as far as practicable. If there are vacancies, KGs should continue to admit children with different backgrounds and needs.

17. Besides, KGs should arrange interpretation and/or translation service for applicants as necessary, or allow parents and children to be accompanied by a Chinese speaking relative/friend during the interview to facilitate communication.

18. Parents of NCS children are encouraged to send their children to KGs with an immersed Chinese language environment as early as possible to facilitate their learning of the Chinese language. In this connection, the Government has put in place a series of support measures for NCS children in KGs. A leaflet “Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Children” has been produced to introduce relevant measures. The above-mentioned leaflet can be downloaded from the EDB’s website (Path: Education System and Policy > Kindergarten Education > Admission Arrangements for Nursery (K1) Classes in Kindergartens > Related Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Children). KGs may print their own copies and distribute to parents of NCS children.

Release of Information on Vacancies

19. The EDB will collect information from KGs on K1 vacancies about a week after the Centralised Registration Dates through an electronic platform, and publish a list of KGs in various districts in late January 2021 showing the KGs that still have K1 vacancies, KGs with no vacancy and KGs which are processing the applications of children on the waiting list and welcome enquiries on their vacancy situation. The list will be published through various channels, including the EDB's website, Regional Education Offices, telephone hotline, etc. to help parents find a K1 place for their children. The EDB will organise briefing sessions on computer data input for KGs before the Centralised Registration Dates and details will be announced later.

KGs not Joining the Scheme

20. The admission arrangements as set out in paragraphs 4 to 5 of this circular memorandum are basic principles, which are also applicable to KGs not joining the Scheme.

Enquiry

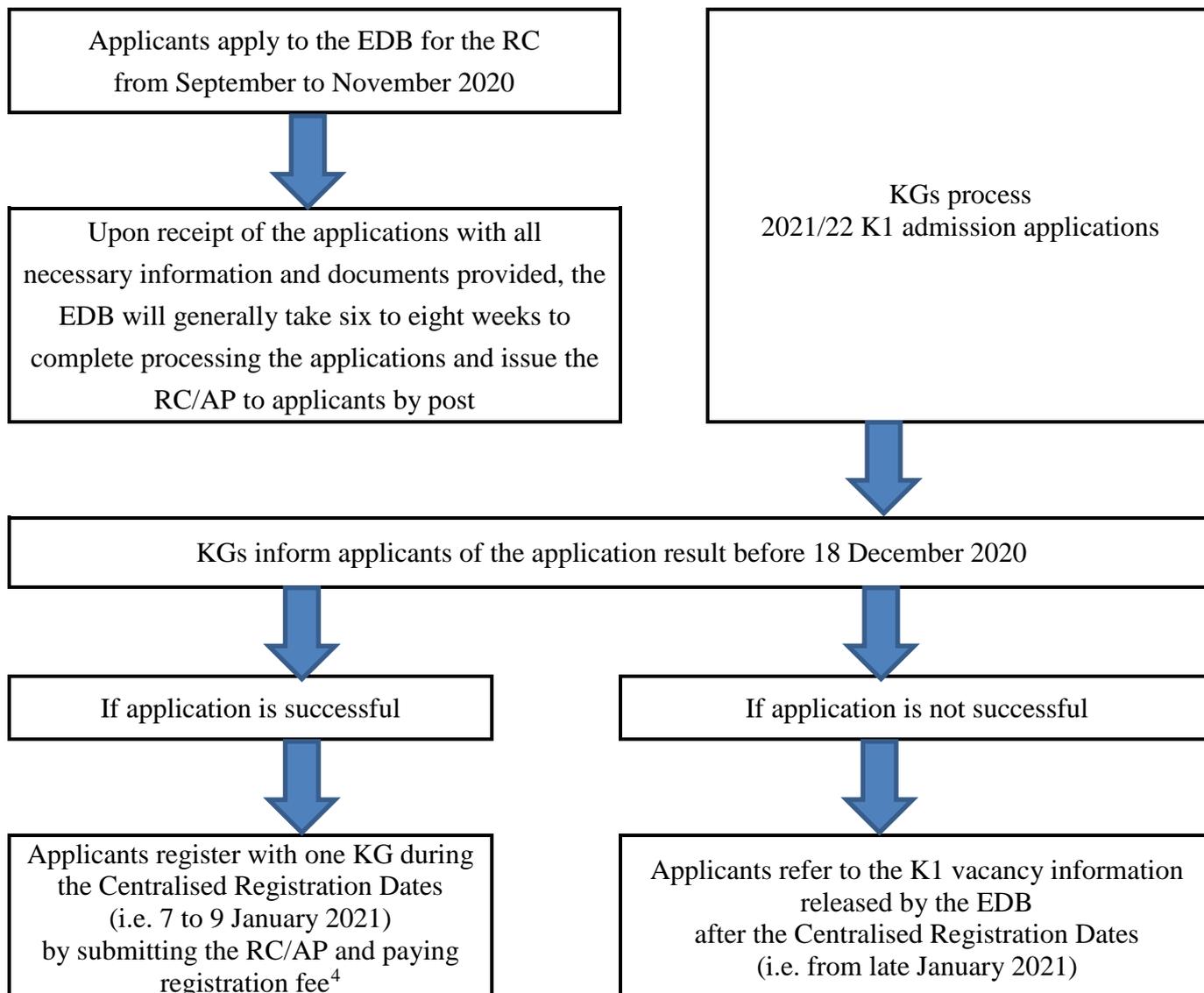
21. For enquiries, please contact the respective School Development Officers or Services Officers of the Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres. KGs and parents may also refer to a set of frequently asked questions concerning the 2021/22 K1 Admission Arrangements which has been uploaded onto the EDB's website (https://www.edb.gov.hk/k1-admission_e) and the latest information regarding 2021/22 K1 Admission Arrangements uploaded onto the EDB website from time to time for reference.

Ms Y Y SO
for Permanent Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of Sections - for information

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for the 2021/22 School Year**

Flowchart



⁴ If an applicant is admitted after the Centralised Registration Dates, he/she is still required to submit the RC/AP for registration. If an applicant intends to change school after registering with a KG, he/she is required to get back the RC/AP from the KG with which he/she has registered. Upon getting back the RC/AP from a KG, the KG concerned will no longer reserve the place for the applicant. Normally, the registration fee paid to the KG with which the applicant has registered will not be refunded.